

SYILX WELLNESS



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ksa'x'w ip k'l tamx'wla'x'w

IT HAS ROOT TIES TO THE LAND



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Service delivery that implements a Syilx cultural framework into everything we do, emphasizing the value of prevention, cultural safety, and self-determination.

ONA Wellness Department

Syilx wellness is built on the strengths of our ancestors and the efforts of those who came before

Governance

Under the mandate of the Chiefs' Executive Council and with the guidance of the Wellness Committee, we are working to improve the health, well-being, safety, and quality of life of Syilx Okanagan Nation community members.

The ONA Wellness Committee is made up of Health and Social Development Directors from member bands. They review all funding proposals and grants and determine whether it is best allocated directly to community or should go into Nation programs if possible.

The Wellness Committee provides guidance over all operations to ensure services:

- Are collective, equitable, and of good quality
- Respond to community need
- Build community capacity

ONA Wellness

Supports a holistic approach to health and social development that promotes self-sufficient Okanagan Nation communities by integrating traditional and cultural approaches to community well-being.

- Responds to changing needs of communities
- Develops and enhances programs and services offered to communities
- Facilitates resource development and sharing with communities
- Provides training opportunities

For more information:

Jennifer Lewis, Wellness Manager
Wellness.Manager@syilx.org
250-826-7844

Pauline Terbasket, Executive Director
director@syilx.org
250-878-6242

We recognize collective responsibilities to all Syilx people, families, and communities

We can't talk about mental health without talking about our families. We can't talk about our families without talking about Indian residential school. When it comes to Syilx wellness, the answers are the same whether we are talking about preventing crime, suicide, or chronic disease. ONA Wellness operates from the knowledge that answers lie in revitalizing the practices that support our collective wellbeing: language, land, captikwł, community.



Programs and Services

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By working together as a Nation, we are able to share strengths, advocate more effectively, and leverage resources in a way that is only possible through collective capacity.



The Family Decision Making Team is excited to celebrate their new name: kʔulusmntm iʔ nəqsiltət (we are gathering for the family).

kʔulusmntm iʔ nəqsiltət

Formerly known as Family Decision Making, kʔulusmntm iʔ nəqsiltət supports Indigenous families in their inherent right to make plans of safety and wellbeing for their children

Family Focused

FDM is a circle where members of the child's family come together with significant others to develop a plan to care for the safety and wellbeing of the child. The children may be at risk of removal by the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) or a removal may have already happened.

Syilx Children Remain in Their Community

FDM provides space for family healing and planning to support and promotes family safety and connection. FDM's primary goal is to prevent Indigenous children from being removed from their homes and communities by strengthening and extending the support networks within and around the family.

Strengths-Based

The program helps develop the capacity of Indigenous communities to support children and their families. This often helps to avoid court involvement and ensures families know about and have access to resources and services that can help.

Together in the Circle

FDM holds a strong set of beliefs about roles and responsibilities. At its core is the importance of kinship and family relationships, elders, culture and the identity of children, respect, openness, honesty, and collective responsibility. The children are always at the heart of the circle—its conversations and planning.

Who Does FDM Service ?

Indigenous families with children age 0-19 living in Syilx Okanagan territory

This is a confidential and voluntary process.

Access Services

Referrals are welcome from parents, family members, from Bands, Friendship Centers, School Districts, MCFD Social Workers

For More Info



FDM.Lead@syilx.org



250-707-0095 ext. 152



250-878-4085



778-754-0060



*“Our children are
our roots
and everything
we teach them is
their responsibility
to carry on.”*

Syilx Early Years

Advocates, supports and promotes child development services and culturally-relevant early year materials for children ages 0-6 years old

For Families: The program seeks to ensure families are connected to programs and services including supporting child development case management and referrals to other programs within the Wellness Team.

Education: A key support for front-line workers is the annual 2-day Early Years Gathering which provides community staff with professional development as well as the opportunity to connect with the experience and insights of peers. In addition, the program provides, on request, culturally-relevant training in areas of early years and child development.

Workshops include: ONA ECE Workshops; ASQ Child Development Assessment Tool; Syilx Parenting Program; Truth and Reconciliation (Blanket Exercise/ Truth Talks for Early Years Educators). Training is offered to groups and communities by request, and provided on-site at on and off-reserve communities.

Resources: ONA has created, developed, and saved more than two dozen Syilx-focused educational resources for children and families, educators and programs. These vital resources help ensure an Indigenous education for our young and are available for distribution throughout the Nation. Stay tuned for more info on the Lending Library.

Connections: The program enhances working relationships with partners. Hosts monthly AECD Network meetings for Nation Program Managers and the quarterly ASCD/AIDP Network.

Who does Early Years Serve?

- Syilx Nation members
- Indigenous families living in Syilx Territory
- Service providers supporting Indigenous children and families

Access Services

- Contact the Coordinator
- Contact an ONA Wellness team member with Jordan's Principle, FDM, or Child & Family Team to request services
- Connect with your local Early Years Educator and ask for a referral

For More Info



Early.Years3@syilx.org



250-707-0095 ext. 225



250-309-4903



778-754-0060



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*The Health Advocate
helps to
continuously
improve the quality
of health service
received by Nation
members.*

Health Advocate

Working to ensure Nation members receive the optimal healthcare that they deserve

Healthcare is complicated and can be hard to navigate.

The Health Care Advocate works to help bridge gaps in services and support Nation members on their journeys through the system.

Learn about access to thorough care. Get support, be better informed, and get help making the best decisions for you and your family based on professional recommendations.

Purpose of the position

- Ensure members are heard
- Identify barriers and assist Nation members to overcome them
- Increase member access to health services
- Ensure services received are holistic and culturally appropriate

Health Advocate can

- Guide members and their families to existing health supports and services
- Provide support at medical appointments
- Consult with medical staff about decision-making on:
 - Client care outcomes
 - Discharge preparations
 - Follow up treatments

Health Advocate helps with

- One-on-one advocacy support
- Accessing FNHA Health Benefits
- Disability applications
- Chronic disease management
- Coordination of community health information sessions

The Health Advocate is a Registered Nurse or a Licensed Practical Nurse who offers service to Nation members—on and off reserve—and helps Nation members access health care services and programs.

Access Service

The Health Advocate takes referrals directly from Nation members—and from Bands, and the Interior Health Aboriginal Patient Navigators.

For More Info



healthadvocate2@syilx.org



250-707-0095 ext. 114



250-309-4903



778-754-0060



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*Improve, maintain,
and ensure quality
mental health and
addiction services
are delivered and
accessible to all
communities across
Sylx territory.*

Mental Health & Addictions

The Mental Health & Addictions Specialist helps to build community capacity, promote harm reduction, reduce stigma and shame, decrease rates of overdose, and promote healing

What Our Team Does

We serve the service providers, the frontline workers, and partners who work directly with community members in need of services. We help address underlying issues in trauma-related addictions within a culturally-informed framework.

We also work directly with high risk mental health clients in community.

- Clinical assessment support
- Referral process support
- Case management support
- Education and training to service providers
- Collaborate on assessment tools, orientation, and communication forms that support clients with complex mental health and addictions issues

Individual Services

- Counselling, assessment, case management support
- Help navigate the system including: treatment, hospital, court, etc.
- Advocate for members
- Support with planning, assessment, treatment, and post-treatment

Community Services

- Naloxone training
- Harm reduction education
- Work with community-based teams
- Clinical interventions when communities are impacted by trauma including working with the Crisis Response Team (ONRT)

Trainings and workshops are open to all community members 15 years and up

Who is Served?

Open to Nation members, their families, and Indigenous people living on reserve

Focused on youth, adults, individuals, and families affected by mental health and/or addictions

Access Services

Contact as below. Referrals can be made through Band health & wellness staff

For more info



MH-Addictions@sylx.org



250-707-0095 ext. 246



250-300-6579



778-754-0060



Jordan's Principle Service Coordination

Improving access to health, social and educational supports and services.

Jordan's Principle is about substantive equality—it means giving extra help when it is needed so First Nations children have an equal chance to thrive.

Who? All First Nations children in Canada are eligible—both on and off reserve. Also any child, including non-Indigenous, who live on reserve.

What? Jordan's Principle covers a range of health, social, and educational services—including the unique needs that First Nations Two-Spirit, LGBTQIA children and youth, and those with disabilities may have.

How? In Syilx Territory, ONA has Service Coordinators available to help families understand Jordan's Principle, do the application, and advocate to link children with products, services, and supports in a timely way.

What is the process?

- Reach out to the ONA Jordan's Principle Service Coordinators
- Once a need is identified, the Service Coordinators will start the request process by gathering required supporting documentation.
- When complete, they will submit your child's request to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).
- Service Coordinators will work with ISC to arrange delivery of products or services, ensure payments are provided or help with appeals processes.



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Our goal is to streamline the process and have your child's needs met in a timely manner.

The Government of Canada

has committed to facilitate access to all products, services and supports for First Nations children without delay or disruption, resolve situations where governments and departments cannot agree about who should pay, and cover the costs of public services to ensure substantive equality for all First Nations children and youth.

Who Can Access Supports?

- All individuals, families and communities who are members of ONA
- All First Nations residing in the Okanagan Region

For More Info

-  jordans.principle@syilx.org
-  250-707-0095 ext. 247
-  250-869-6391
-  778-754-0060

Jordan's Principle Service Coordination



What is Covered?

Jordan's Principle applies to all products, services and supports ordinarily available to all children, including additional services to ensure substantive equality, to provide culturally appropriate services, or to safeguard the best interests of the child.

Who is Eligible for Jordan's Principle Funding?

Children under the age of majority in BC (19 years), who permanently live in Canada and are:

- First Nations with registered status living on or off reserve
- First Nations eligible to be registered under the Indian Act
- Indigenous, including non-status First Nations, who live on reserve
- First Nations without status or ineligible for status living off reserve but recognized as members by their Nation
- First Nations with one parent or guardian who is registered or eligible to be registered under the Indian Act

What do ONA Jordan's Principle Service Coordinators do?

Work with families to improve timely access to health, social and educational supports and services.

How can ONA Service Coordinators help my family?

- Help with Jordan's Principle applications
- Link families to provincial and federal resources
- Work collaboratively with service providers
- Advocate for children, families and communities
- Support families in telling their story
- Provide assistance to families with the appeals process

Learn More

Jordan's Principle Call Centre:

- 1-855-JP-CHILD (1-855-572-4453)

Info on Jordan's
Principle Program:



SCAN ME

Info on Canadian Human
Rights Tribunal Rulings:



SCAN ME





Okanagan Nation Response Team

ONRT helps our people find healthy life-choosing paths and provides crisis response and trainings

ONRT provides community based support in response to suicide and suicidal behaviour, substance use-related crises and other crisis situations in community.

ONRT supports families in crisis, and promotes protective factors against suicide for our youth and Nation members.

ONRT builds community capacity, creates a strong peer network, and supports the wellbeing of individuals, families and community.

ONRT Team Activities

- Culturally safe response, intervention, referrals
- Prevention education and activities based in culture
- Train and support team members in community
- Specialized training
- Collaborate to build safer communities

Who is on the ONRT Team?

Our team is comprised of committed individuals from different communities who have a desire to help in times of crisis and are willing to learn and teach others about strategies for positive wellbeing.

Team members are either appointed by their community or have volunteered and met the criteria to be a part of the team.

Members must be over the age of 18 and connected to Nation communities.

Team members are trained to effectively respond to crisis in community and are also able to deliver educational workshops.

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ONRT is built on principles of Syilx people helping Syilx people.

Syilx knowledge and strength-based practices are used for a community of care approach.

Who Does ONRT Serve?

Open to Nation members, their families, and Indigenous people living on reserve

Services are confidential and non-judgmental

Access Service

Each member community has an ONRT protocol. In a crisis—or for trainings—community members can call Health or Social staff, their Band Manager, or Band Council.

For More Info

 criticalresponse@syilx.org

 250-707-0095 ext. 101

 250-869-9350

 778-754-0060



Trainings Available

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills

2 Days • Participants must be 16+

ASIST is a 2-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid that teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and then to work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. ASIST is widely used by healthcare providers. Participants don't need any formal training to attend the workshop—anyone 16 years or older can learn and use the ASIST model.

What you learn:

- Understand how beliefs and values effect views on suicide and interventions
- provide guidance and suicide first-aid to a person at risk in ways that meet their individual safety needs.
- Identify the key elements of an effective suicide safety plan and the actions required to implement it.

safeTALK

1/2 Day • Participants must be 15+

This is a half-day training that provides tools to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to resources. safeTALK is an internationally recognized workshop developed by Living Works Education.

Most people with thoughts of suicide don't truly want to die, but are struggling with the pain in their lives. Through their words and actions, they invite help to stay alive. safeTALK is designed to train helpers to recognize these invitations and take action by connecting them with life-saving intervention resources, such as caregivers trained in ASIST.

Community-Based Trainings

Depending on the needs of community, the ONRT Team and Coordinators are available to do workshops on a variety of topics:

- Depression: spaʔa
- Grief: qəlspuʔus
- Mindfulness, Loving Yourself
- ʔast spuʔus, Lateral Kindness
- Syilx Wellness strategies and coping skills

Also, the team can collaborate to build programming to suit the needs of community.



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In 2014, the overall rate of violence in Indigenous communities was more than double that in the rest of the population.

YES is helping families change these cycles.

You Empowered Strong (YES)

Supporting our families and communities to address the impacts of family violence and sexual assault

The YES Program brings Syilx knowledge and strength-based practices to the work of creating a Nation-shared response to family violence. Services are family-driven and community-based. Each community determines what resources and trainings they need. Each family receives support in the process of creating holistic wellbeing and safety plans.

Confidential, Non-Judgemental

YES provides one-on-one support which varies from case to case:

- Emotional support
- Advocacy
- Connecting clients to cultural supports
- Debriefing
- Developing a safety plan
- Assisting clients in accessing resources and referrals to other programs

Purpose of the Program

The intergenerational effects of colonization normalized violence in our communities. YES brings together Syilx ways, strength-based practices, and community solutions to build the capacity of families dealing with the impacts of family violence and sexual assault.

- Supports individuals and families experiencing family violence or sexual assault.
- Increase recognition of time-honoured traditional and cultural teachings, healings and activities that help vulnerable families grow stronger and healthier.
- Encourage strong community relations and practices.
- Build prevention and response capacity through professional collaboration.

YES Components

- Response
- Specialized training
- Cultural education & prevention
- Collaboration & partnerships

Who Does YES Serve?

You must be a member—or partner or relative of a member—of an Okanagan Nation Member Band

Services are confidential and individual and/or family led

Access Service

By self-referral, family, friends, or through an organization or band

For More Info



YES.TeamLead@syilx.org



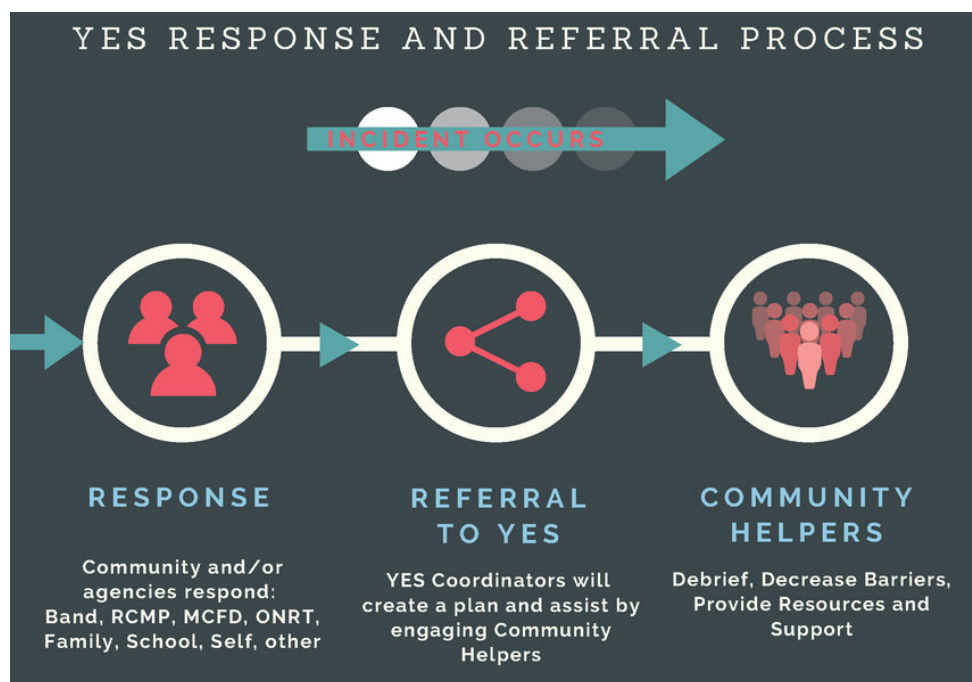
250-707-0095 ext. 215



778-392-8133



778 754 0060



Prevention and Training

The YES program provides awareness, education, training, and resources on de-normalizing violence and sexual assault as one of the key steps to create change and change behaviors.

- Hosting workshops
- Holding gatherings on Healing, MMIWG2S, Wellness
- Doing prevention thru campaigns and community sessions

Collaboration

We develop relationships to create strong peer and community networks that increase the quality of service to our communities.

The Syilx Family Violence Network

Brings together crisis specialists and professionals from throughout the Nation to discuss trends and link service providers to communities. Current trends in the territory include:

- Lack of housing and safe homes for youth
- Increased service of high risk youth and substance use
- Concurrent disorders, substance use, and mental health issues are making frontline service challenging
- Increased reporting of sexual assault,
- Lack of capacity for counselling services
- Lack of access to traditional healing services

Training By Request

The YES Team is available to do workshops to enhance knowledge around family violence, sexual assault, and their impacts including personal safety and trauma-informed practice. The team collaborates to build programming to suit the needs of community.



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Youth Wellness Coordinators aim to empower youth voices, promote nation building, and encourage healthy peer networks.

Youth Wellness

Over the years, the ONA has worked with communities to develop popular programs for children and youth

RNative Voice • Ages 13-18

Youth Wellness works in a preventative way to connect youth with peers and communities in healthy ways, supporting youth to make good choices and cope with social pressures. The program encourages participation of Elders, storytellers, land-based Knowledge Keepers, and mentors.

Modules include

- Identity & Family Connections
- Traditional Lifestyle as Health-Nutrition/Habits
- spaʔa: Depression & Suicide
- qəlspuʔus: Grief & Loss
- nʔaʔnaʔsqilxʷtən: Addictions
- ʔast spuʔus: Loving Oneself—Self Care & Self Esteem
- Traditional Sweat & Completion Ceremony

Traditional Games • Ages 12+



Support is available for Syilx communities to integrate Traditional Games into their own child and youth programs. The Syilx Traditional Games Toolkit was developed to improve the health of the Nation by ensuring syilx games continue to be played.

Wraparound Support

For Syilx youth ages 12-19 with mental health concerns

We use a holistic, cultural approach to help youth and their families navigate the mental wellness system, be informed about services, and develop a wellness plan with the help of family, supports, and community service providers.

Access Services

- Contact the Youth Wellness Coordinator

For More Info

-  youthwellness1@syilx.org
-  250-707-0095 ext. 205
-  778-392-8966
-  250-707-0166



Syilx Indian Residential School Committee

Moving Forward in Our Truth

ONA secured funding in 2012 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Commemorative Process with the mandate to engage in the work of educating Canadians about what happened in the Indian residential schools.

TRC Projects

The former ONA TRC Council is now the Syilx Indian Residential School Committee (SIRSC) with each member community represented and operating within its Terms of Reference. Under the guidance of the SIRS Committee and through the strength and resiliency of the Syilx people, significant projects have been created to commemorate the experiences of former Syilx Indian residential students and to promote healing with the communities and Nation.

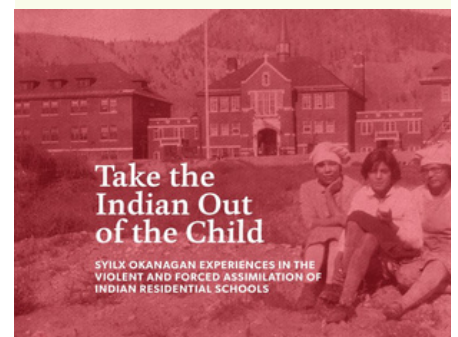
- Interviews with 51 former Indian residential school students
- Book : *Take the Indian Out of the Child: Syilx Okanagan Experiences in the Violent and Forced Assimilation of Indian Residential Schools*
- Video: *Stand for Justice*
- Residential Schools Workshops for Syilx Youth
- Nation Monument and Community Monuments
- Poster Campaign

Healing Strategy

A Nation-based strategy for healing from the Indian residential school experience and intergenerational impacts has also been developed through community engagements in each of the seven bands with Elders, Survivors, family members, and band staff.

”

*We are strong.
We are warriors.
We are resilient because
we are here despite
everything that we went
through. We have rallied.
We have persevered.
We are coming back to
the strength of being
Syilx —for all time.*



*We have come a long way, and we
still have a long ways to go.*

*We will continue to walk with our
ancestors, with pride and courage
while we move forward to reclaim
our spirits.*

We are all born innocent.

*— SIRS Committee on IRS Healing
Strategy*

For More Info

✉ Wellness.Manager@syilx.org

☎ 250-707-0095 ext. 205

📞 250 826 7844



Policy and Planning

The Policy & Planning Team develops strategies and provides technical support to the Chiefs Executive Council and Wellness Committee, working towards priorities that include:

- increasing services for children, youth and families
- better access to primary care
- enhanced elders care
- improved mental health supports

The team engages with community at various levels to build upon efforts underway at the Nation level to strengthen our collective health and wellness outcomes.

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Within a context of growing recognition of Indigenous rights, the ONA has been working closely with communities to develop Nation level plans in interlinking areas of wellness. For Syilx Okanagan people, wellness is holistic and interconnected. Together, these plans build a collaborative approach to supporting communities to provide sustainable wellness services for Syilx people. They are the culmination of decades of previous work by so many people, coupled with the teachings and traditions that have been passed down within Syilx Okanagan culture for millennia.

sqilx[™] Syilx Okanagan Wellness Framework is being created to guide families, communities, and the Nation to develop plans that support wellness today and for the People-to-Be. It is defined by the insights and priorities of Nation members based on extensive engagement. Developed as the foundation for infusing Syilx perspectives into interconnected plans, the Framework is the evolution of decades of work by many people and is grounded in the insights of ancestors and Syilx Okanagan Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and cultural practitioners of today who shared generously.



Child & Family Planning

The Syilx Nation has a sovereign responsibility and mandate to ensure the cultural integrity, safety, and well-being of all our children and families are upheld.

nəqsíltət Family Plan

This Family Plan is the most recent evolution of the Nation's collective efforts to revitalize aspects of our people's sqilx^wcawt (ways of being) related to family wellness. It lays out cultural ways of being and services that support families to be strong and supported in holistic ways, grounded in sqilx^wcawt. We wish to acknowledge the Syilx Okanagan communities, including Elders, parents, aunts, uncles, youth and children, who all shared their knowledge, perspectives and their dreams for the people-to-be.

axá i? scuntət i? tl ǰa?xítət ǰl i? nəqsíltət Syilx Nation Family Declaration

Syilx Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members have all shared that there is no rigid set of written rules that outlines the rights of our children—it was understood as contained in our languages, knowledge and captik^wl. At the same time, it has also been shared that Nation members know what their children's rights are. These unwritten laws are part of our sqilx^wcawt and, for 1000s of years, those rights and associated responsibilities have been passed down.

Starting in 2016 and signed in 2022, the Child and Family Planning Team supported Nation members and language speakers to develop the axá i? scuntət i? tl ǰa?xítət ǰl i? nəqsíltət which lays out the principles and values that our people live by—and that we expect all visitors to our territory to abide by when working with our children. The Family Declaration can be used as the base for protocol agreements with partners, as a guide for community wellness policies, and as the foundation for a written expression of Syilx Okanagan family law.

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*“...the jurisdiction
of our children
is our
jurisdiction
and that is our
inherent right.”*

*—Syilx Grandmothers
Gathering 2020*

Building On the Work That Came Before

The ONA Child and Family Team builds upon the work of past generations and of the Syilx leadership and Wellness Committee in order to support member communities to achieve their desired outcomes related to child and family wellbeing .

- Developing Syilx processes to address the lack of equitable resources, gaps in service, policy and practices.
- Engaging with member communities and supporting the creation of their Child and Family Community Plans
- Supporting Grandmothers Groups and Community Tables

For More Info:



CF.Lead@syilx.org



250-707-0095 ext. 151



250-859-1572



778-754-0060



Syilx Data Governance Planning

Engaging with communities to better understand their wellness data needs

From time immemorial, Syilx people have gathered, stored, protected, and shared knowledge. Oral storytelling of captikwł taught laws, customs, values, governance structures, and principles that, together, define and inform Syilx rights and responsibilities to the land and to culture.

One of the main aspects of Syilx data governance has been protection. Careful consideration was given to who should be trained as the safe keeper of certain knowledge, and how and when the knowledge was shared. To this day, there continue to be roles and responsibilities in families, communities, and the Nation for knowledge keepers. It is important that traditional laws and protocols are followed when gathering, storing, protecting, and sharing knowledge.

For years, Syilx leadership has expressed the need to inform wellness data decisions, planning, and monitoring of programs. For example, leadership has questioned why some strategies are given preference over others. Good quality data that is timely and informed by sqlxwłcawtət (our Syilx ways of being) is needed to paint a picture of how our nation members are doing and what wellness trends are taking place.

Syilx data governance planning work started in 2019 under a multi-year funding commitment that ONA received from Indigenous Services Canada. It is one piece of the ONA Wellness work being done to better the lives of the Syilx people.

”

Any interpretation of knowledge must be done with good intent and for the benefit of syilx peoples.”

—Nation member

What is Data Governance?

Data sovereignty is the right Syilx people have to tell the Syilx story, with Syilx data, in a way that is responsible to all our relations.

For More Info

 data.research@syilx.org

 250-707-0095 ext. 251

 778-392-7529

 778-754-0060



Syilx Data Governance Plan

The majority of the wellness data governance work has been dedicated to restoring our relationship with data. The balanced approach of the Four Food Chiefs Model provided the building blocks for the Draft Wellness Data Governance Plan.

ýlmixʷm skəmxist—tradition: Knowledge keepers and language speakers have been sharing Syilx laws and protocols relating to data Syilx ways of being and knowing.

ýlmixʷm spíłəm—relational/interconnectedness: Syilx wellness data is deeply rooted in the stories of individuals, families, communities, and the Nation. Our data stories interconnect with our ancestors, future generations, the tmixʷ, and to all relations. It is an ever-continuing spiral of Syilx story interaction.

ýlmixʷm siya?—what could be: ýlmixʷm siya? embodies the spirit of creative energy, vision, and innovation. Through Nation member engagement and learning from other Indigenous Nations, we are exploring how to renew Syilx data sovereignty and how the traditional ways of data governance that Nation members shared can be used as stepping stones for discussions on Syilx principles for data sovereignty.

ýlmixʷm ntytyix—action: ýlmixʷm ntytyix embodies the spirit of unwavering determination and action orientation. Chief ntytyix will help breathe life into the vision, respond to community-specific needs, and advance the wellness of the people.



Mental Wellbeing Planning

A call to develop integrated wellness plans was initiated by the need for programs and services that are relevant to the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

Historical and present day traumas perpetuated by colonialism have contributed to a "soul wound" for our people, but still most services continue to be delivered by the mainstream system. Issues include confusion about service provider roles, long wait-lists, ineffective transitions to and from services, and services that continue to fall short of meeting the mental health needs of Syilx individuals, families and communities.

Planning: The ONA has developed a Mental Wellbeing Plan grounded in Syilx knowledge and ways of being, covering the lifespan from infancy to elder-hood. This plan is a component of the Syilx-centered Wellness Framework, builds on work undertaken through the Syilx Traditional Wellness Strategy (2012), and is informed by previous and ongoing community engagement.

Vision: The Mental Wellbeing Plan builds on Syilx traditions, ideas, skills and abilities to serve our people. The vision is providing appropriate services in a manner that respects Syilx values, spirituality and traditional knowledge. The plan defines wellbeing from Syilx perspectives and experiences. It focuses on understanding mental health issues through a cultural lens, an approach that is more holistic and inclusive. The intent is to work toward integration and expansion of local programs, and implementing new services, while also working with mainstream mental health and substance use services to provide supplementary resources including specialized care such as psychiatry and other disciplines.

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The Syilx Okanagan Nation has a long tradition of healing practices and approaches.

The Nation is best positioned to design approaches aimed at improving the mental wellness outcomes for Syilx people

—Allan Louis, Syilx Health Representative

Syilx Mental Wellbeing Plan

has four components and a Business Proposal in place to ensure sustainable funding of programs.

1. Community wellbeing: Prevention & promotion
2. Access and support to active healing services
3. Collaboration and partnerships
4. Healthy thriving organizations

For More Info

 MWNation.Planner@syilx.org

 250-707-0095 ext. 254

 250-681-3123

 778-754-0060



Health Planning

The ONA is committed to improving the health of our People not only for our present community members but for the stelsqilxw—the People to Be.

For Syilx people, health is multifaceted, holistic and interconnected. The health of Syilx people is reflected in the health of the individual, family, community and land. These elements are inseparable and cannot be looked at in isolation.

Priorities: In 2010, the ONA created a community-driven Syilx Health Plan. Since then, many initiatives have addressed the priorities identified in 2010, including more opportunities for the early years sector, support for Syilx community members to connect to health care facilities, and access to health benefits through health advocacy program.

Other priority areas have also emerged: traditional wellness and healing on the land, the opioid crisis, trauma-informed practice, and linking health issues with root causes and social determinants of health.

Collaboration: Engagement with communities and the Wellness Committee ensures strategies can be developed to support communities with complex health issues including: Primary Care Networks, cultural safety and anti-racism initiatives, preparing for flooding and fires.

Partnerships: FNHA supports Nations with advocacy and facilitation, including funding for programs like Traditional Wellness and generally bringing resources closer to Nations and communities. ONA also works with Interior Health, including on a Letter of Understanding that is being revised to reflect changes in legislation.

Planning: Beyond initiatives in health and regional coordination to support communities and the Nation, further engagement is being planned to create a Syilx-specific understanding of what health means.

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“To advocate for Syilx control and management of their health, programs and services”.

—Syilx Health Mandate

The Health Planning Team:

Works through the Nation Health Planner together with the Health Care Advocate and Syilx Early Years Program. The Nation Health Planner collects information from community sources, such as Band staff and Health Directors, to identify current health priorities and ensure investments in health always correspond to the needs on the ground in community. Health also coordinates regional activities and supports local initiatives of Bands to enhance health services.

The Health Team works with the Planning and Policy Teams in Mental Health, Data, and Child and Family so that strategies are aligned and investments in health can be advocated for and allocated where they are needed most.

For More Info

 NationPlanner.Health@syilx.org

 250-707-0095 ext. 151

 250-869-5634

 778-754-0060



Nation Wellness Events

As Syilx people, gathering together is a time-honoured tradition. From gathering together for storytelling in the winters, or in the summers to fish, events continue to hold an important role in our daily lives.

From coming together for storytelling in the winters or for fishing in the summers, events continue to hold an important place in our daily lives.

Community-focused events help encourage and instill cultural teachings, education and awareness for the Nation and the public. They build success in terms of understanding cultural identity through holistic occasions such as the Unity Run, the Wellness Gatherings, and the Captikʷl Forums. These events help ignite the spark and passion in the journey that youth, women, men, and elders transition through.

Numerous Syilx Wellness events and campaigns support well-being and our Indigenous ways of knowing. These initiatives contribute to overall goals including:

- Improve the health, well-being, safety and quality of life of Syilx Okanagan Nation community members
- Preserve Syilx laws, culture, language and education
- Implement Syilx law into governance and operations planning

#WeLoveLanguage Campaign

The #WeLoveLanguage Campaign brings awareness to the language we use when speaking to others and issues of violence in our communities. This includes using inclusive and appropriate language, but additionally being mindful of listening to others when they create their own boundaries.

Grandmothers Gathering

This event allows Syilx Grandmothers within the Nation to gather and focus on familial roles, Nation needs, and traditional models of child-raising in today's world. Grandmothers identify capacity needs within the Nation, and reclaim family roles and responsibilities.

Syilx Drug Forum

Creates space for sharing info, resources, and personal experiences related to drug and alcohol use. It began in response to the opioid drug crisis and focuses on bringing awareness to overdose as well as discussing strategies for addressing needs and creating healing around this complex issue.

Spirit of Syilx Unity Run

The Unity Run brings youth together to raise awareness about suicide and violence. The run gets youth on the land as a form of healing, as well as providing space to engage with youth from across the Nation.



Elder Youth Gathering

The Elder and Youth Gathering is held annually as a platform for relationship building, knowledge transfer and nation building between our elders and youth.

Purple Ribbon Campaign

This annual campaign leads up to International Opioid Overdose Awareness Day on August 31. Focus is on sharing resources, promoting discussion, offering info, reducing stigma and supporting healing.

MMIWG2S Gathering

The Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLBTQQIA+ (MMIWG2S) has been a National tragedy over many decades. The MMIWG2S Gathering features Keynote speakers and presentations on current issues so the Syilx Nation can begin to take action moving forward.

Syilx Indian Residential School Healing Gathering

The Syilx Indian Residential School (SIRS) Committee at the ONA holds an annual gathering for Syilx Okanagan residential school survivors, intergenerational survivors, and other family members to share stories, support each other, and participate in healing together.

Four Food Chiefs Gathering

This event focuses on information sharing, utilizing the enowkinwixw model through our Four Food Chiefs. Each year, the event consists of workshops, discussions, presentations, keynotes and activities that focus on connecting to the land and water, connecting to each other, our well-being and learning useful tools to thrive!

Children First Forum

The Children First Forum is an annual ONA event held to bring together syilx Okanagan leadership, staff, and community members working with children and families to equip them with tools for care of our children. This includes building relationships, gaining new ideas and perspectives, preparing to lobby for legal jurisdiction, and addressing any gaps.

cap̓ti'kw̓l: kw̓æckw̓æcstim? i? st̓ə̓t̓ə̓t̓et

The cap̓ti'kw̓l Forums are held for community engagement in examining cap̓tikw̓l on the Syilx Way of Living, how lessons from the cap̓ti'kw̓l connect with our modern lives and can be integrated in Policy & Planning.



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The Early Years Gathering brings Early Childhood professionals together to build capacity develop resources in this annual 2-day professional development training grounded in Syilx values and practices.

Women's Wellness Gathering

This important annual event creates space for women to gather on the land to discuss their roles and responsibilities in keeping one another safe. It is a space for women to share openly and discuss women's issues freely, developing a spirit of camaraderie and nationhood.

Men's Wellness Gathering

This annual gathering creates space for men to come together on the land to discuss their roles and responsibilities. It is a safe space for men to share openly and to discuss men's issues freely, developing a spirit of camaraderie and nationhood.

For More Info



events@syilx.org



250-707-0095 ext. 233



250-768-0166

SYILX

WELLNESS



101-3535 Old Okanagan Hwy.
West Kelowna, BC V4T 3L7
TEL 250.707.0095
EMAIL: WPAssist@syilx.org

Bering Office

101-3535 Old Okanagan Hwy.
West Kelowna, BC V4T 3L7

Wade Office

101-3535 Old Okanagan Hwy.
Penticton, BC V4T 3L7

www.okanagannation.com

In honour of the strength and commitment of our ancestors who created the path of healing that we walk today, and for the well-being of the next seven generations—the Okanagan Nation Alliance Wellness Team is committed to excellence in its services to you and your family.



Okanagan Nation Alliance



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